

## FOLK DANCING IN SCHOOLS

### A HELP TO THE STREET PLAYING CITY YOUNGSTER.

Girls taught the Peasant Dances of a dozen Races—Solo Work and the Idea of Competition Not Encouraged—Hope That All May Be Informed.

A five-year-old Elektra of the East Side, armed with a terrific looking axe, runs out the way to Public School 177, where a special exhibition of folk dancing is to take place. Elektra admits that she dances herself sometimes, but to-day only the crack dancers are to take part. Then she resumes swinging motions with her weapon, threatening the safety of passersby.

The folk dancing is "after school" work and its importance has been recognized by the Board of Education, which since



A SWEDISH FOLK DANCE.

last November exercises a certain supervision over it. Reports are made to that body as well as to the committees of the original organizers, who several years ago started the work of the Public Schools Athletic League, of which the girls' branch is to-day a very important feature. The expenses of the work are, however, borne by personal subscriptions.

The officers at present are president, Miss Post, succeeding Miss Catherine S. Laverich; vice-presidents, Misses Richard Aldrich, Cleveland Dodge, S. R. Guggenheim, Henry Phipps, James Speyer, Treasurer, Mrs. I. N. Phelps-Stokes; secretary, Mrs. J. M. Ellsworth; assistant secretary, Miss Ethel Tully.

The big schoolhouse at Market and Monroe streets is emptied of pupils except those who are to take part in the exhibition and the kindergarten class which, on its way to freedom, stops for a moment while its teacher puts it through a short exercise, the beginning of the dances, which later on in the higher classes are developed into the most complicated and strenuous dances of the peasant people.

It is explained by Miss Elizabeth Burchenal, the inspector of athletics, who is accompanied by the principal of the school, Miss Brady, that no attempt is made to emphasize the folk dancing of the special locality where the school is situated and you are convinced of this fact almost immediately on reaching the big, well lighted gymnasium when a trio of black haired children plainly Jewish show their dexterity in an Irish reel.

The children chosen for the after school work are about forty in number in this special school, the work of which is at the moment duplicated in hundreds of schoolhouses all over the city. Several hundred teachers give their services

## THEY'RE HUSTLERS IN JAPAN

### INCOMING SHIPS MET BY HOST OF SALESMEN.

They Set Up Shops on the After Deck and to After the Tourist Trade—But the Little Brown Men Can Hustle in Bigger Operations of Business Too.

Japanese hustle is a particularly lively variety of that useful trait. When you enter a Japanese port to-day a commercial assault as full of vim as any on 26th Street Hill is made the moment the quarantine officials board the ship.

The struggle for business carries the salesmen in the launches and rickety sampans out to the very door of the harbor in an effort to reach the visitor before the foreigner or the lagging countryman stow away gets a chance at his pocket.

Sometimes the quarantine officials connive to see that the merchants have plenty of opportunity to sell. All the time the ships at anchor these persistent peddlers set out by the leading houses will be with the traveler; he cannot lose them.

Steamship masters assign them the after deck on which to display their wares. You may buy anything from a basket of fruit to a set of satsuma. Walking about in the crowd are Japanese tailors who will measure you while you are buying some trinket and will deliver you about at the ship the next evening.

For the first few days you will perhaps pay a trifle more for things bought of merchants on the ship than you would pay ashore, but as the days go by prices on shipboard drop. The last day in port you can buy for 25 cents an article for which \$2 or \$3 may have been asked the day you arrived. As the ship weighs anchor you may get the same thing for five cents.

The hospitality of the merchant in the port knows no bounds," says a correspondent of the *Bookkeeper*. "The ever present, cheery smile greets you at the door. A boy scurries to meet

gratuitously after the difficult hours of school work, and extra classes are held once a week to instruct them in turn, for it is not easy to keep ahead of children to whom dancing is as natural a form of expression as talking or walking and who in a few lessons show the most marvellous proficiency in this regard.

At the annual meeting of the girls' branch of the athletic league held at the Colony Club a few weeks ago about fifty children selected for grace and proficiency by Miss Louise Wingate, one of the board of directors, whose father, Gen. George Wingate is president of the Public Schools Athletic League, gave an exhibition of what had already been accomplished, not only surprising by the grace and agility of the dances themselves but as well suggesting the improvement in health and poise generally considered.

Where the health and general condition of the pupils average about the same, the roll of honor is selected as a means



INSPIRATION IN THE KINDERGARTEN.

nal's experience in getting these is interesting in the extreme and covers a wide range of territory, some curious clues taking her to Boston, to Chicago and even to Brooklyn. Accompanied by her sister, a musician of proficiency, who transcribes the unpublished songs, she has gathered much material, of which she is the sole owner and dispenser.

Among these dances are the Russian comarinskias, the Hungarian cardas, the Bohemian romernas, the German landlers, the Italian tarantellas, Irish and Scotch jigs and reels, the English morris dances, the Swedish carousels and several utilitarian dances showing the industries of the Scandinavian races artistically suggested by gesture and body movements. One of the most interesting dances seen at Public School 177 is the "reap the fax" dance, which shows how the fax is planted, grows, is cut down, stacked, hocked, corded and finally twisted into a single thread, representing which the forty girls form a line passing to and fro, as if ready to be wound on an invisible shuttle. Accompanying this are the folk songs of reaping, of linen and cotton weaving.

The castanets of the Tarantella used by the peasants in this dance are to represent

the rattle of the serpent, from the poison of which the victim is supposed to die, the real Tarantella showing the death agonies. Denoted by the smiling faces and supple bodies of the children it takes on a different interpretation and in place of the traditional castanets little snappers bought at the corner shops furnish a very good substitute. In contrast to this is the Hungarian Cardas, with its staccato emphasis by the feet and its strenuous turns, and a dance of the Bavarian Alps, chiefly remarkable for the high quick jumps into the air, the jumper held by the waist of the partner, an exercise which demands great skill and lightness rather than strength, while it gives the appearance to the looker-on of the latter quality.

The Spanish dances are not included in the catalogue provided. "Great difficulty," Miss Burchenal says, "has been experienced in finding any interesting and beautiful Greek dances," although in her search she has haunted the Greek quarter, attended the advertised public dances and penetrated to many of the homes of the Greek emigrants. There is no record of the music they employ and their memories seem vague and impractical. The East Side is always filled



A DANCE WITH CLAPPERS.

are fast crowding out competing lines of the transpacific service. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha, Japan's largest steamship line, is turning out a new ship almost monthly. It will continue to do so for some time to come.

To date most of the new steamers, thoroughly modern and of good tonnage, are on the run between Japanese ports and Pacific coast ports to this country. Other new vessels will in time augment the fleet's operations out of Japan to European and Mediterranean ports.

"One may stand on the deck of a liner picking its way through outcropping coasts and fitting sampans in Nagasaki's narrow, landlocked harbor, counting ship after ship in all stages of construction in the countless yards skirting either shore. So narrow is the channel that the click and clang of the steam riveter, the chug of hoisting machinery and the roar of the boiler-makers will almost deafen you. The place is a veritable beehive and each hive is doing its level best to turn out its ship first.

"The world at large is inclined to look upon the Japs as something superhuman, something possessed and to be afraid of, perhaps because of the enormous strides they have made as a people in the last few decades. But really the Jap is no more able than his neighbors in Asia. He simply beat the others to Occidental methods and set his head and heart to learn and follow them.

"Because of his sheer get up and get as we know it in this country and because of his advanced knowledge and experience over other Eastern peoples he will, until the rise of mighty, potential China, dominate all Asia in commercial and industrial pursuits."

A Bishop's Fish Story.

From the London Evening Standard.

The Bishop of London, addressing the members of the Guild of St. Edmund, said he did not know whether his hearers had ever thought what an awful thing it was to see an old man's name in the *Times* of London, but there was an old Scotch gentleman who went one better and called himself "The Minister of London."

"It will be all right when the Minister of London comes; he is sure to catch a salmon. On one occasion, the Bishop added, when he was in Scotland he nearly converted all the gillies from Presbyterianism to Episcopalianism. He said to them, 'Now, old boys, six salmon before lunch and held up five fingers and a thumb. By an extraordinary coincidence he had six times and caught six salmon before lunch. That was why the "Minister of London" had an inflated reputation on the Tay.

with ironic contrast so you are not surprised to learn that the Mountain Dance of the Swiss peasants is particularly well done by a little girl of Italian parentage who lives in a sub-cellar. Another holder of honors is Irish Maggie who managed by hook or by crook to appear rigged out in a complete Scotch suit on another contesting afternoon, danced the Highland

Schools Athletic League is to develop work within the school rather than competition between schools, to select events in which teams rather than individuals may compete, to conduct all athletic practice and all competitions in the school building or grounds after school hours under the direction of teachers in the school and to admit visitors to competitions or demonstrations on invitation only. The absolute lack of self-consciousness which is the usual accompaniment of this accomplishment in dancing classes is a very noticeable and incidentally a particularly pleasing feature of the folk dance work. To emphasize it dances are specially favored that can be danced in sets of two, four, six, eight, as may be, and the individual dance given by a solitary child with the rest looking on is discouraged. When, as in the case of the Highland fling, the dance is perfected by a single representation, the class dances together and there is no preference given to one more than another in applause or instruction.

"The importance of athletics for boys has been recognized always and opportunity given the growing youth of that sex, but the development is certainly as necessary for girls, particularly the city girl. There are 325,000 public school girls in the city of Greater New York and the 15,270 of the last census is only a small proportion of these. It is the aim of the

Fling and walked home proudly afterward with the Winged Victory in her arms, followed by an admiring throng in which the Polish element was in the vast majority. Outside her tentment, to the accompaniment of a hurdy gurdy playing "The Rosary," they danced the Bohemian furiente, the latest acquisition of dance knowledge.

These street scenes are however becoming less prevalent for the outlet of youthful enthusiasm afforded by the after school work. Both in the dancing classes and the gymnasium work in the school-rooms is taking its place.

"The street has been in times past," says one of the teachers, "the only available place for the girls to play. The Little Mothers have taken their charges there and, stunted in growth themselves, have found in the passing strains of a street piano and its invitation to the dance, the only possible outlet for the inherent need of expression. Schoolgirls on their way to and from their classes have dallied in these highways, and all the pleasure and joy of existence they have found there. Tired with the day's work, what wonder if the playground of the dusty street, of the swarming sidewalk, accompanied too often with sordid lessons for the precocious intellects, has been the posteducational course as well as its preliminary?"

If success is to be estimated by figures, here are some given in the private office of the principal, after the exhibition is over:

1905-6. 325 girls under 35 teachers in 9 schools.  
1906-7. 2,334 girls under 165 teachers in 59 schools.  
1907-8. 8,219 girls under 253 teachers in 125 schools.  
1908-9. 15,270 girls under 374 teachers in 255 schools.

"The general principle," says Miss Burchenal, "which has been consistently followed by the girls' branch of the Public

problem is to secure health and happiness and the principal element considered is to have the folk dancing done for school and social purposes only. It is not wise to cultivate in the girls the idea that they can make money by exhibiting their dancing, for when the idea of pay enters, temptations become fixed with it comes naturally the idea of the stage, which finally gets so prominent that it overshadows every other."

One of the most interesting outcomes of the work of 1908 was the outdoor festival held at Van Cortlandt Park, the last week in May, which it is intended to duplicate on a larger scale this year. There were forty-four maypoles erected and 2,500 girls who danced. Smaller festivals of like nature were held at Prospect Park and every Saturday afternoon at Central Park, where an observer might see what had been learned indoors during the cold winter days, folk dances here, there and everywhere, sometimes complete, frequently without music, little steps and fragments suggestive of the entire dance, all done with the same joyous abandon that marks the "after school" work.

As the way is trailed from Public School 177 after an interesting afternoon, the place of the axe bearing Elektra is taken by two small boys who stop their quarrelling to show the desired route. One of them remarks that his companion has "made a black and blue spot on my bone."



A HUNGARIAN DANCE.

girls' branch to provide them all a wholesome and joyous recreation and we are moving rapidly toward the realization of that end."

In the recommendation of the girls' branch work to public attention and favor it is said, in addition to advantages already specified, that "there are in the physical exercises, including folk dances and general athletics, certain real dangers which if not rendered harmless might result disastrously. The

and holds a beaked promontory in the middle of his face to prove it. The accused admits mildly that he did "hit me first in me basement."

Miss Burchenal, who is accompanying the party, and who knows the vernacular of the East Side, translates to the effect that although it might seem to the uninitiated that the latter speaker was referring to his anatomy, on the contrary the reference was to his domicile, where the fight had taken place the day before.

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